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## Hanky Panky Park: Police poo-poo pesky park pleasures

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By Mara Grunbaum and Cornelius Swart

*Video Blog (see below) by Cornelius Swart*

David Buffington has walked his dog in Kelley Point Park for seven years. In that time he's seen a few too many wieners.

"Most people, I think, who go out there every day have at some point encountered naked men or men engaged in sex with each other," said Buffington, 58, who lives in Portsmouth.

Buffington said he's been running into paramours for as long as he's been visiting the 104-acre North Portland park. He and his wife have both seen men in various stages of undress, he said, and he's come across a pair of red underwear and an abandoned sex toy on the park's winding trails.

"Once you've had an orgasm under the sunset, you're kind of partial to doing that again," says a 40-year-old gay man dressed in shorts, baseball cap and sunglasses.

He is sitting on a log on a washed-out trail along the Willamette River in St. Johns' Kelley Point Park. The man, who did not want to be identified, said he enjoys having sex outdoors and claims to have witnessed countless sex acts along this park's secluded trails and rivershores.

"This parking lot is more for younger, hipper types," he said, referring to the trailheads often used as launching pads for "romantic interludes." He claimed to have seen straight couples having sex in the western reaches of the park. "That parking lot [at the west end] is more for heterosexuals and families."

Buffington, however, thinks it's inappropriate for people, straight or gay, to have sex in public. But so far his concerns have fallen on deaf ears.

Though he's tried to talk to police and park officials over the years, Buffington said, nothing seems to have changed. "I don't know if I'm being, like, a jerk for reporting this," he said. "I know there are places for gay men to find each other, and I just don't think that public parks are appropriate."

Two Wikipedia links, [squirt.org](#) and [cruisingforsex.com](#) (**no way we are linking to these sites my friend, sorry**), offer directories of hookup spots that list Kelley Point as a place to go. Personal ads on [craigslist.org](#) also hint at the park's goings-on. Between May 12 and 17, five different craigslist personals referenced Kelley Point Park and alluded to sexual activity. One ad, posted to the "casual encounters" section on April 16, sported the headline "Kelley Point Park walkabout" and read, "I'm taking my big 8-inch wiener out for a walk around 4:30-5PM."

### Patrols and priorities

Public safety officials say Kelley Point has been a sexual meeting spot for years. Mark Warrington, public safety manager for Portland Parks & Recreation, said the park's size, relative isolation (it's about four miles from the nearest residential area) and good drive-up access make it a popular rendezvous point.

"A lot of it's driven by the weather," Warrington said. "It's something that happens in all large parks around any city in the country. We try to manage it, but it does exist."

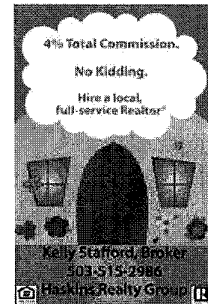
"Things happen in the park, and that's one of them," said Warrington, who stressed that public indecency is just one of the various kinds of misbehavior that large parks like Kelley Point host. "Dogs off leash and people drinking in the park ... that kind of thing is very normal," he said.



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"If there's any pattern to park misuse, regardless of what the park misuse is, we try to get park rangers and/or police to deal with it."

Cruising in public places has long been an aspect of urban gay culture, Deborah Heath, director of Lewis and Clark College's gender studies program, explained in an email. It's "probably not unlike straight guys cruising certain 'meat market' bars," she wrote, except that social stigma and laws targeting homosexuals once drove gay men "underground."

Outdoor trysts are prohibited under public decency laws, but enforcement isn't always stringent. Warrington said that park maintenance staff try to keep bushes trimmed back — a "crime prevention by environmental design" technique — to discourage people from using them as romantic hideaways.

Park rangers have at times intercepted people "behaving inappropriately" and asked them to leave the park, Warrington said, but "We're limited on patrol resources ... it's hard for the park rangers or the police to be out there all the time."

#### Matters of time

If a park user witnesses some "private time" and calls 9-1-1, it's unlikely that an officer would be dispatched, said Sgt. Brian Schmautz, spokesman for the Portland Police Bureau. Since public hanky-panky isn't an imminent threat to person or property, calls about it aren't a priority, and even if an officer were eventually sent, it would take time to reach the distant park.

"The only times when we can make arrests are when an officer is able to physically arrive fast enough in order to catch someone in a position where we can make an arrest," Schmautz said. "It's not like people will be having sex for two hours — most people."

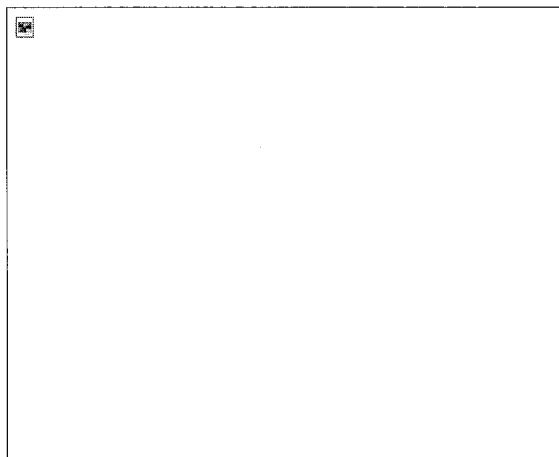
Though he couldn't speak to Kelley Point specifically, Schmautz said that there have been times in the past when officers were discouraged from cracking down on consensual sex in parks, especially at night. "You don't need to go out there and stick your nose in," he said of that attitude.

Kristina Kropf, David Buck and their dog Lofa are frequent park visitors, who only became aware of the "riparian delights" going on in the park through The Sentinel's investigations. Now that they know, it doesn't seem to bother them.

"I find it oddly exciting," said Kropf. "I don't find it gross or anything."

Neither does the 40-year-old "hiker" sitting on the log. He claims he doesn't have sex in the park, but uses it as a place to meet men. "I feel for people who do. There should be a place where people can go to have sex outside."

**SEE OUR 'SEXQUEST' VIDEO BELOW, AS TEAM SENTINEL LOOKS FOR FRISKY FELLOWS FROLICING IN THE FOLIAGE AT KELLY POINT PARK**



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